

Moriah Morgan's drawing of a familiar St. Mary's County scene is hanging in the U.S. Capitol, right alongside other works of art by students from throughout the country.

The 15-year-old Hollywood teenager loves to paint and draw, but never really considered entering a major contest. Her mother, Kaylene Morgan, talked her into entering the Congressional Arts Competition.

Each year an exhibit of student art from across the country is added to the mix of bronze and marble statues, oil portraits and frescoed murals on display at the Capitol. Morgan's work was selected from among the entries in Rep. Steny Hoyer's district.

"I wasn't doing it for anything special," Morgan said of the selected piece. "It's an Amish horse and buggy I painted for my lessons."

Morgan drew the piece with colored pencil, inspired by a photograph her mother had taken in the northern end of St. Mary's County.

"My mom saw an ad in the newspaper [for the arts competition] and thought I should give it a try," Morgan said.

Kaylene Morgan said her daughter has had an obvious disposition for art since she was 2 or 3 years old. "She's always had a pencil or a crayon or a marker in her hand," she said. Kaylene has kept piles of Moriah's artwork since she was a toddler. "Everything she does is really wonderful."

Moriah Morgan is homeschooled by her mother at their Hollywood home. She participates in the Churchville Christian School home-school program, where she will be a junior next school year.

She has taken four years of violin lessons. She also takes private art lessons with Diane

Burroughs.

“Moriah’s improved a lot and is getting more sure of herself and her work and is experimenting,” Burroughs said. She described Morgan as a dedicated and patient artist who likes to try new ways of creating art.

Morgan especially likes colored pencils, though she also paints with watercolors and other media.

She draws and paints a variety of subjects, mostly still life such as a pear, flower or her violin.

She is looking at a few Christian colleges that have strong art and music programs where she might attend in a few years.

Morgan met with Hoyer (D-Md., 5th) at the Capitol and participated in events recognizing competition winners from across the country.

“He was very nice,” she said. She was treated to a private tour of the Capitol.

The winning entries from each representative’s district contests will be on display for one year in an underground hall that leads from the House offices to the Capitol building itself. The competition was started about 25 years ago.

“Moriah is an extremely gifted artist and she produced an exceptional entry this year,” Hoyer said in a statement. “Her artwork was one of many strong submissions, as 10 talented young artists from all five counties in our district entered the competition.”

Hoyer also announced this month his appointment to the summer 2006 Congressional Page

Program, Cassie Wilson of White Plains, a rising senior at Maurice J. McDonough High School. Pages live in a residence hall on Capitol Hill, attend classes at the House Page School, and perform vital duties within the U.S. House of Representatives.

“I am very proud of Moriah and Cassie, both of whom are outstanding and talented individuals,” Hoyer said in his statement. “We are fortunate to have such promising young leaders in the 5th Congressional District.”